

NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issued January 11, 2001

**By ROW Sciences, Inc.
RFA No. 003**

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NIMH CONSTITUENCY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

Request for Applications

This Request for Applications (RFA) is designed to give interested applicants:

- General information about the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program;
- Specific information as to what will be required of Outreach Partners; and
- Instructions for preparing an application.

Background

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), one of the National Institutes of Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the Federal agency responsible for conducting and supporting research on mental disorders, the brain, and mental health services. It is also responsible for disseminating research results by conducting public and professional education activities in cooperation with numerous consumer, advocacy, and professional organizations; responding to public and professional inquiries; and conducting media relations. By disseminating the results of research on the brain and behavior, NIMH seeks to promote effective practice among primary care and other health care providers and give mental health consumers the information they need to seek effective and appropriate diagnosis, treatment and services—thus closing the gap between the knowledge gained through research and real-world practice. For additional information on the Institute and its mission, goals, and activities, please see <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>.

Description of the Constituency Outreach and Education Program

The Constituency Outreach and Education Program is a 5-year communications initiative of NIMH that enlists Outreach Partners in every State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to help speed the translation of science into mental health services. This nationwide partnership is delivering science-based information on mental health and mental illness through outreach activities targeting the general public, individuals with mental disorders and their families, minority communities, primary care providers, mental health professionals, employers, educators, and others. The Program also stimulates coalition building between the Outreach Partners and affiliates of some 200 national professional, consumer, and advocacy organizations that constitute the NIMH Education Network.

With the Constituency Outreach and Education Program, NIMH is seeking to advance the quality of mental health in the Nation, as envisioned in *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, by:

- Establishing an Outreach Partner in every State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico that will build statewide coalitions and ensure widespread distribution of science-based materials and messages;

- Increasing NIMH's outreach to and interaction with individuals with mental disorders and their families, medical and mental health professionals, the business community, civic groups, educators, and others concerned about mental health;
- Increasing awareness of the importance of basic and clinical research, including clinical trials, in improving the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders;
- Broadening opportunities for individuals and constituent groups to provide feedback to the Institute on NIMH research priorities; and
- Working toward the elimination of mental health disparities among different segments of the population.

Outreach Partners

NIMH is now soliciting applications for Outreach Partners in the program. Following two competitive selection processes, by October 2000 NIMH had named 43 Outreach Partners in 42 States and the District of Columbia. (This list can be found on <http://www.outreach.nimh.nih.gov>.) Interested organizations from six of the remaining States (see page 8 of this RFA) and Puerto Rico should complete an application to be considered in the current competitive process. NIMH anticipates that this will be the final RFA and that all Outreach Partner selections will be completed in this cycle.

Each Outreach Partner will conduct a mental health communications program for the public and health professionals through media relations and will conduct educational outreach to minorities. Partners are also expected to do one or more of the following: conduct outreach to special populations such as youth and the elderly; sponsor educational efforts focusing on primary care physicians, nurses, and other groups; conduct a worksite program; and promote recruitment of participants in NIMH-supported clinical studies. Partners will be required to submit progress and evaluation reports. ROW Sciences, Inc., which is administering the Constituency Outreach and Education Program for NIMH under Contract No. N01MH90005, will oversee all subcontracts with Outreach Partners.

Benefits to Outreach Partners

Stipend

Each Outreach Partner will receive a \$5,000 annual stipend. NIMH recognizes that the stipend will not cover the costs of the tasks required, and encourages Partners to use it to leverage additional resources. The award monies are offered in recognition of each organization's partnership with NIMH. Please be aware that all costs associated with performing the required work and meeting timelines and deliverables schedule shall be the responsibility of each Outreach Partner.

This program is funded for 18 months with an option for renewal of an additional 2 years.

Training and Technical Assistance

NIMH will provide Outreach Partners with ongoing technical assistance in project-related activities, as well as high-quality training on cutting-edge research.

Networking Opportunities

NIMH will host an annual conference for Outreach Partners that will include both networking and training opportunities; on alternate years, the conference will include the NIMH Education Network organizations. Additionally, NIMH will facilitate electronic networking opportunities.

Materials

Outreach Partners will have ready access to state-of-the-art NIMH materials for regional dissemination.

Other Benefits

Formal association with NIMH will enhance Outreach Partners' visibility and credibility, and provide a constant stream of the most up-to-date, science-based information. Outreach Partners will have opportunities to give NIMH direct feedback on research priorities, helping to shape the National mental health research agenda to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

APPLICATION

How to Address the Required Tasks in Your Proposal

All Outreach Partners will be required to complete Tasks 1 through 4 below:

Task 1. Manage the organization's work in the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program, including accomplishing the tasks, ensuring that all educational efforts are science-based, and preparing contract deliverables.

Each Outreach Partner organization must be able to work toward the goals of the Constituency Outreach and Education Program and must have an infrastructure that allows it to accomplish the required tasks and prepare the contract deliverables. (See page 7, "Reporting Requirements and Deliverables.")

Outreach Partners must also show a commitment to science-based education as indicated by:

- A signed letter of commitment from an academic medical center with expertise in mental illness/mental health, expressing a commitment to science-based education and a willingness to work with the proposed Outreach Partner throughout the life of the program.
- A curriculum vitae (CV) and a signed letter of commitment from a qualified scientific advisor who agrees to review all locally developed public and professional education materials and messages (including presentations) for scientific accuracy. This advisor should be:
 - A psychiatrist, psychologist, or doctoral level social worker;
 - Actively or recently engaged in mental health/mental illness research, as indicated by recent publications in a peer-reviewed journal or by recent awards of research grants or contracts in the field of mental health/illness; and
 - Affiliated with a university.

In your proposal, *briefly*:

- Describe your organization, including the size of your membership.
- Show how your organizational goals relate to the goals of the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program.
- Name your program manager (point of contact) and describe how this person will oversee the program, including ensuring that tasks are accomplished and that educational efforts are science-based. Include his/her resume.
- Cite the roles of other key staff in the project. Include their resumes.
- Include a CV and signed letter of commitment from a qualified scientific advisor who meets the criteria described above. Indicate how your scientific advisor will work with

the program.

- Show your ability and willingness to comply with reporting requirements and evaluation activities (page 7) by noting past experience in completing similar reports and confirming your organization's intent to comply with the items listed.
- Describe how the stipend will be used.
- Include a signed letter of commitment from an academic medical center that meets the criteria described above.

Task 1

Maximum 2-3 pages + resumes/CVs + letters of commitment

Total Points: 20

Task 2. Use print and broadcast media to promote science-based messages on mental health and mental illness, targeting the public, particularly individuals with mental disorders and family members, throughout your State or Commonwealth.

Outreach Partners will work to increase public awareness of the critical role of research in continuing to revolutionize the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders and in improving the lives of people affected by these disorders. All information, messages, and materials provided under the auspices of the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program will be science-based; that is, based on the results of scientific research that has been published in peer-reviewed literature. Partners will promote spokespersons who are knowledgeable about how scientific advances can influence clinical practice and improve mental health.

In contacts with the media, Partners will be encouraged to use information and documents provided by NIMH on a wide variety of topics. Within the last year NIMH has produced and disseminated numerous publications, fact sheets, and press releases on a wide range of topics, including children and adolescents (such as the results of a large clinical trial on treatments for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD], the use of psychotropic medications in children, and teen suicide risk), St. John's wort, and depression and the elderly. The solid scientific basis for the recently released *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* offers a platform for disseminating key messages about mental health and mental illness. Outreach Partners can play an important role in disseminating information through media within their States, both by supplementing their current organizational activities and by initiating some new ones.

To help in this task, Outreach Partners will periodically receive from NIMH announcements of new scientific findings, new publications, public service announcements (PSAs), video or audio news releases, and live read scripts. Partners are also expected to promote science-based mental health messages by capitalizing on media interest in national or regional events such as Brain Awareness Week (March); Mental Health Month (May); National Anxiety Disorders Screening Day (May); Mental Illness Awareness Week (October); and National Depression Screening Day (October).

In your proposal, *briefly* describe:

- Similar media outreach you are currently doing or have done recently.
- Your plan for performing this task, including enough detail to make it clear that you have thought out the major steps/activities needed to achieve your goals. In addition to traditional mechanisms, propose creative ways to capture the public's attention through the media.
- How this plan will be integrated into ongoing activities of your organization.
- How you plan to evaluate your success.

Task 2

Maximum 2-3 pages

Total Points: 25

Task 3. Implement an outreach program to reach minority groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics/Latinos, or Native American/Alaskan Natives, with science-based mental health messages throughout your State or Commonwealth.

One of the goals of the Constituency Outreach and Education Program is to work toward eliminating mental health disparities for all minority groups, including those listed above. Achieving this goal requires targeting both individuals and the communities in which they live, and crafting messages and materials so that they are culturally appropriate, sensitive to, and respectful of the beliefs, values, and language of the particular group. (If Outreach Partners choose to *develop* educational materials for the targeted audiences, the materials must be reviewed and approved by the scientific advisor for scientific accuracy.)

NIMH believes that minority outreach can best be accomplished by creating or extending existing local or State coalitions that involve opinion leaders and organizations that include a broad representation of your target audience. Preferably, these coalitions should be sustainable beyond the life of the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program.

For this task, it is expected that Outreach Partners will evaluate target audience satisfaction with the outreach program and materials. Although NIMH will provide training in evaluation, strong candidates will have evaluated similar activities in the past.

In your proposal, *briefly* describe:

- Similar work you are currently doing or have done recently, including a brief description of how you may have evaluated those activities.
- Which minority group you will target and why. Please include demographic information.

In rare cases, an applicant may choose not to target minorities, for instance when there are so few ethnic minority members in a State that organized efforts to reach them would be infeasible. In this case, the applicant must (1) justify the decision, including providing demographic data and (2) propose targeting another special population (e.g., older adults, school-aged children, rural populations, or college-aged adults).

- Your plan for performing this task, including enough detail to make it clear that you have thought out the major steps/activities needed to achieve your goals. In describing your coalition building plan, please include (1) an overview of your organization's current membership in local or State coalitions and partnerships with other organizations that will enhance the success of this program and (2) additional organizations, resources, and networks that would enhance the success of the program. *Please be certain that you strike a balance between direct outreach to your target group and activities aimed at gatekeepers to your target group [e.g., primary care physicians, faith-based communities, civic groups].*
- How this plan will be integrated into ongoing activities of your organization.
- How you plan to evaluate your success.

Task 3

Maximum 2-3 pages

Total Points: 25

Task 4. Attend all annual meetings of the NIMH Outreach Partners and participate in other scheduled trainings or technical assistance opportunities, as appropriate.

NIMH is committed to helping Outreach Partners enhance their ability to provide mental health educational outreach. We ask for a reciprocal commitment from each Outreach Partner to take full advantage of opportunities provided. This includes:

- Sending a representative to an annual meeting to enhance project-related knowledge and skills, to network with other Outreach Partners, and to provide feedback to NIMH on research priorities. ***All new Outreach Partners are expected to send a representative to the next annual meeting, scheduled for April 22-24, 2001, in Oakland, California.*** Note that direct costs associated with this person's attendance—transportation, lodging, and meals—will be the responsibility of NIMH and will NOT come from the \$5,000 stipend.
- Participating in training and technical assistance opportunities provided periodically throughout the project that meet your project-related needs. (Note that most of these opportunities will be in the form of conference calls.)
- Participating in the flow of information and ideas among all Partners by regularly monitoring (at least every other day, but preferably daily) and contributing to (as appropriate) discussions on the electronic mailing list (ListServ) established for Outreach Partners; accessing the NIMH Web site; and periodically contributing to articles for an NIMH Outreach Partner publication.

In your proposal, please confirm your organization's intention to participate in each of the bulleted items above.

Task 4

Maximum <1 page

Total Points: 5

All Outreach Partners must accomplish ONE of the following three tasks. While you may be currently conducting activities in several of these areas, for the purposes of this RFA, please address only one task from among 5, 6, and 7:

Task 5. Conduct science-based presentations for groups that serve as gatekeepers to a special population (e.g., older adults, school-aged children, rural populations, and college-aged adults).

Members and/or staff of one or more of the following organizations or agencies may serve as gatekeepers to your special population:

- Primary care professionals or other health professionals;
- Schools;
- Professional and civic groups;
- College, university, and veterans' health programs;
- Hospitals and community health clinics; or
- Health maintenance organizations.

The science-based presentations should feature spokespeople who are knowledgeable about the latest scientific advances in the mental health field and how they can influence clinical practice. Additionally, NIMH-produced materials should be distributed, as appropriate. The scientific advisor should review the content of presentations, as well as any educational materials developed locally, for scientific accuracy.

For this task, it is expected that Outreach Partners will evaluate audience satisfaction with the outreach program and materials. Although NIMH will provide training in evaluation, strong candidates will have evaluated similar activities in the past.

In your proposal, *briefly* describe:

- Similar work you are currently doing or have done recently, including a brief description of how you may have evaluated those activities.
- Which special population you will target and why. Please include demographic information.
- Your plan for performing this task, including enough detail to make it clear that you have thought out the major steps/activities needed to achieve your goals.
- How this plan will be integrated into ongoing activities of your organization.
- How you plan to evaluate your success.

Task 5

(Please address only one task from among 5, 6, and 7)

Maximum 1-2 pages

Total Points: 15

Task 6. Work with universities and other research institutions within your State or Commonwealth to stimulate recruitment of volunteers to participate in clinical trials sponsored by NIMH.

Clinical trials (also called clinical studies) are an important means of developing new treatments and medications for mental illnesses. Recently, NIMH has embarked on a number of large clinical trials (effectiveness studies), in which treatments are tested in patients who live in the community, come from diverse backgrounds, have co-occurring disorders, or experience atypical patterns of illness. Effectiveness studies also address quality of life, ability to work, social functioning, treatment adherence, and cost-effectiveness. Most of these studies are conducted at a number of sites around the country and will enroll up to 5,000 participants per study. NIMH is developing various strategies for increasing awareness of the importance of clinical trials and recruiting participants. Outreach Partners can contribute significantly to advancing the development of effective treatments by assisting NIMH in this effort. For information on NIMH clinical trials, see <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/studies/index.cfm>.

In your proposal, *briefly* describe:

- Your plan for performing this task, including enough detail to make it clear that you have thought out the major steps/activities needed to achieve your goals.
- If applicable, similar recruitment activities you have conducted.
- How this plan will be integrated into ongoing activities of your organization.
- How you plan to evaluate your success.

Task 6

(Please address only one task from among 5, 6, and 7)

Maximum 1-2 pages

Total Points: 15

Task 7. Design and conduct presentations to management staff, employee assistance professionals, or employees at the worksite(s) of at least one major employer in your State or Commonwealth.

Depression and anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders and often co-occur. Many employed people have these disorders, yet because they are undiagnosed and untreated, or treated ineffectively, they lose time from work or lose productivity. Worksite presentations should feature spokespeople who can articulate the importance of diagnosis and effective treatment in reducing the burden of mental illness on employers as well as employees, and who are knowledgeable about the latest scientific advances in the mental health field and how they can influence clinical practice. NIMH-produced materials should be distributed, as appropriate. A new worksite kit on anxiety disorders and depression for employee assistance professionals will be made available to Partners

later in 2001. The scientific advisor should review the content of presentations, as well as any educational materials developed locally, for scientific accuracy.

For this task, it is expected that Outreach Partners will evaluate audience satisfaction with the presentations and materials. Although NIMH will provide training in evaluation, strong candidates will have evaluated similar activities in the past.

In your proposal, *briefly* describe:

- Similar work you are currently doing or have done recently, including a brief description of how you may have evaluated those activities.
- Your plan for performing this task, including enough detail to make it clear that you have thought out the major steps/activities needed to achieve your goals.
- How this plan will be integrated into ongoing activities of your organization.
- How you plan to evaluate your success.

Task 7

(Please address only one task from among 5, 6, and 7)

Maximum 1-2 pages

Total Points: 15

Reporting Requirements and Deliverables

In addition to completing the tasks above, Outreach Partners must complete and deliver the following reports:

- Completion of a training needs assessment questionnaire (Annually: 1 month after contract award [ACA]; each year thereafter).
- Completion of a progress report form supplied by NIMH (3 times yearly: 4 months ACA; every 4 months thereafter).
- Update on the Outreach Partner's annual activity plan (13 months ACA; each year thereafter).
- Completion of a feedback form on the NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program as supplied by NIMH (Annually: 1 year ACA; each year thereafter).
- Final (cumulative) progress report (August 31, 2002, or, if the period of performance is extended, at a later agreed-upon date).

Organizational Eligibility and Capabilities

To be eligible for an award, an organization must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Location

The organization must be based in one of the following States or in Puerto Rico. It must conduct its outreach activities in that same State or in Puerto Rico:

Alabama	Hawaii	Puerto Rico
Arkansas	New Jersey	
Colorado	New Mexico	

2. Infrastructure

- Evidence of 501(c)(3) status (e.g., letter from the Internal Revenue Service).
- Evidence of meeting Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements (e.g., personnel policy).
- Evidence of stable organizational infrastructure and financial solvency (e.g., a copy of the auditors' opinion letter from your most current audited financial statements).
- Technological capabilities that include easy access to e-mail and the Internet.

3. Experience

NIMH is looking for a diversity of strengths in its Outreach Partners. Likely awardees will have a track record of success in each of the required tasks (this should be described in your proposal under those tasks). Some awardees will be able to simply supplement their current activities with NIMH messages and materials; others will need to expand current programming. All awardees must be prepared to meet the broad mandate of the program, which includes coalition building and disseminating science-based messages and a wide variety of materials to diverse audiences.

4. It is preferred that applicants have a demonstrated ability to use one source of funding as leverage to raise additional funds in the form of *unrestricted* educational grants or in-kind contributions from other sources, such as foundations, corporations, etc.

5. A maximum of two organizations per State can partner for the purpose of this application, with the understanding that these organizations will share funds according to their own agreement. (For more information, please see <http://www.outreach.nimh.nih.gov/qa.htm>.)

In your proposal:

- Provide the documentation requested under #2 (Infrastructure) and other descriptions, as needed.
- Briefly note any past experience in leveraging funding.
- If two organizations are partnering for the purpose of this application, please explain the respective roles and responsibilities of each organization.

Application Review and Evaluation Criteria

A panel of experts in mental disorders and mental health systems, representatives from national advocacy organizations (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, National Mental Health Association, and National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association) and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, and consumers will review all applications.

Individual review panel members will assign scores to each section using the point system noted below, followed by a meeting of the full panel to discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of each application. They will then make a recommendation to NIMH based on both the assigned points and the discussion. Final decisions are made by NIMH.

Task 1 (Managing the project)	20	
Task 2 (Media coverage)	25	
Task 3 (Outreach to minority group)		25
Task 4 (Training opportunities)	5	
Task 5 or 6 or 7	15	
Organizational Capabilities	<u>10</u>	
Total Points	100	

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING THE APPLICATION

Application Contents

1. Cover letter signed by an officer of your organization with the authority to commit the organization to the application content.
2. Cover page, which includes the title of the RFA; the RFA number (003); your organization's name, address, and Tax Identification or Federal Identification Number; and the name, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for your contact person.
3. Table of contents
4. Proposal for completing the required tasks
 - Task 1 2-3 pages + resumes/CVs + letters of commitment
 - Task 2 2-3 pages
 - Task 3 2-3 pages
 - Task 4 <1 page
 - Task 5 or 6 or 7 1-2 pages
 - Organizational Capabilities 1 page + documentation requested

Applicants are strongly encouraged to stay within the maximum page lengths noted above. ***Please do not send extraneous material, such as membership lists.***

5. As noted in the boxes throughout the RFA, please remember to include the following materials with your application:
 - Resumes for your program manager and other key staff (Task 1, page 1).
 - CV and signed letter of commitment from a qualified scientific advisor (Task 1, page 1).
 - Signed letter of commitment from an academic medical center (Task 1, page 2).
 - Evidence of 501(c)(3) status (Organizational Infrastructure, page 8).
 - Evidence of meeting Federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements (Organizational Infrastructure, page 8).
 - Evidence of stable organizational infrastructure and financial solvency (Organizational Infrastructure, page 8).

Application Delivery

Please send six copies of the application (including one that is clipped together [not bound] so that it is easily duplicable) to:

NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program
ROW Sciences, Inc.
1700 Research Boulevard, Suite 400

Rockville, MD 20850-3142
Attention: Eileen Zeller

Time Line for Asking Questions and Submitting Applications

January 29 **Letters of Intent** are due. A Letter of Intent is *not* required in order to submit an application, nor does it bind an organization to submit an application.

February 5 **Questions** about the RFA are due. **Responses** to all questions will be posted on the NIMH Web site <http://www.outreach.nimh.nih.gov/qa.htm> as they are received and processed. (A list of questions submitted by applicants during the first two application rounds is also posted on that Web site.) All questions submitted regarding RFA #3, as well as the responses, will be e-mailed to organizations that submit Letters of Intent.

If you have additional questions about the RFA, send them to Eileen Zeller, via:

a. E-mail, outreach@mail.nih.gov;

b. Fax, (301) 294-5401; or

c. Mail

NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program

ROW Sciences, Inc.

1700 Research Boulevard, Suite 400

Rockville, MD 20850-3142

February 26 **Applications** due at ROW Sciences by 4:00 p.m. eastern time.

March Expert Panel reviews applications and makes recommendations to NIMH.

March 21 **Applicants notified** about award status. Awardees should plan to begin tasks. The subcontract is for 18 months and will continue through August 31, 2002, with an option to renew for another 2 years.

April First installment of stipends sent out (upon completion of needs assessment and submission of invoice).

April 22–24 Constituency Outreach and Education Program Annual Meeting in Oakland, California. All Outreach Partners are expected to send a representative.

NIMH CONSTITUENCY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM
LETTER OF INTENT
RFA No. 003

If you intend to submit an application in response to this RFA, please return this completed form by **January 29, 2001**. Your expression of intent is not binding but will greatly assist us in planning for application evaluation.

_____ We intend to submit an application.

_____ We do not intend to submit an application for the following reasons:

Organization name _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

E-mail address _____

Authorized signature _____

Typed or printed name and title _____

Date _____

Return Letter of Intent to:

Eileen Zeller, MPH
NIMH Constituency Outreach and Education Program
ROW Sciences, Inc.
1700 Research Boulevard, Suite 400
Rockville, MD 20850-3142

Fax: (301) 294-5401 *OR*
Outreach@mail.nih.gov